Defining the Online Media Characteristics of Blogs Using a Text-mining Technique

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Abstract

The blog, as a popular new online communication medium, has become an alternative publication type, which any individual or group can easily and inexpensively use to present textual and graphical materials online. Using this tool, they can articulate, document, communicate, and distribute ideas.

In order to investigate its media characteristics, this research used the text-mining self-organizing map technique to survey the articles in 300 blogs in Sina, Taiwan, trying to identify the similarities and differences between them and the traditional mass media from two aspects, including the social community management strategies and communication effects.

The research found that the non-content-related variables, including the length and number of articles, upload frequency, graphic usage, author identification and gender, did not influence a blog’s popularity. What really mattered was its content-related variables, such as the categories of blogs and articles.

Key Words: blog, text-mining, self-organizing map, online community management, media characteristics